

BRANCHING OUT

Creating Connections to End Sexual Violence

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Social Media and Sexual Assault

By Katy Adler



Our world is becoming increasingly smaller and more connected due to advancements in technology and the growth of social media. We are all familiar with the benefits that ever-improving technology can have on our lives, and likely just as familiar with the uglier side of these advancements. Increased anonymity and the fast paced nature of how we now communicate have resulted in social media and smart phone technology easily being used as a weapons to bully, harass and humiliate.

In a number of well-publicized cases, videos and pictures of sexual assault victims and the assault itself have been uploaded to sites like Facebook, Instagram or Twitter and shared by perpetrators (or witnesses to the assault) on social media networks. Social media is also used to attack victims, expressing disbelief of the assault, blaming the victim for the assault, or just making cruel statements about the victim. This can be humiliating and violating for survivors, and can result in feelings of shame and re-traumatization. Perpetrators, or their allies, may use social media to pressure the survivor to recant, or to drop charges for the assault. This bullying and harassment can push survivors to a point where the only escape they can see is to take their own lives.

We can intervene when we see statements or images that blame or shame victims by reporting that activity as offensive, or by directly confronting the individual when possible. We can also act through social media to support sexual assault survivors by making statements encouraging survivors to get help, and expressing compassion for survivors. In addition, we can choose to not click on or support links that perpetuate violence against women, sexism, or the objectification of women (including stories like the recent leak of nude celebrity photos).

Finally, we can use social media to support healthier messages by sharing links, stories, and images that support efforts to end sexual violence. New, thought-provoking articles and videos are created regularly which introduce an alternative perspective to the messages we often receive from movies, television, and social media about violence against women. Upworthy is one example of a great place to find some of these resources. By sharing these alternative perspectives, we can work to fight against the barrage of images, articles, and statements that lead to victim blaming and are so harmful to survivors of sexual assault.

—Katy

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Legislative Update

By Vicki Biehn

The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA) worked on many bills that impact sexual assault survivors and/or the community during the last legislative session. This article will review some of the changes to the statutes that were passed in the 2013-14 session.

Victim Accompaniment Legislation

A primary issue that WCASA worked on in the past, and will work on in the 2014-2015 legislative session, is a bill that would pass victim accompaniment legislation. This bill would allow a survivor to be accompanied by an advocate during various stages of the criminal justice process - including the sexual assault forensic exam, law enforcement interview, and court proceedings - if the victim wishes to have an advocate present. Currently, victims do not have this right, and sometimes the victim is not allowed to have an advocate be there with her/him to provide support. We believe that providing emotional support and information to the victim during the criminal justice process helps to restore some of a victim's sense of control over her/his life and helps to keep the victim engaged in the criminal justice process. If the victim stays engaged in the criminal justice process, more offenders will be held accountable for their crimes, leading to a safer community.

Act 76-Changes to Housing Statutes

In the old statute, a landlord was allowed to terminate tenancy if a crime was committed in/on the property. Now the law states that the lease is void and unenforceable if it contains provisions allowing a landlord to terminate tenancy solely based on commission of a crime in/on rental property if the tenant is the victim of that crime. This act also requires a lease to include a specific notice of sexual assault/domestic abuse protections in regards to provisions for terminating the lease. The lease is now void and unenforceable if it does not contain these notices of protections. These laws help to protect survivors from being evicted from their property because they were a victim of a crime on the property.

Human Trafficking Changes

Human trafficking is a serious offense that is widespread throughout the nation and that impacts victims in our community. Racine County has a group called the Racine Coalition Against Human Trafficking which is working to address this crime in our community. This act removed the "without the individual's consent" element from the definition of trafficking and expanded the "commercial sex act" definition to be more

inclusive of different types of sexual contact. This act also expands the list of prohibited conduct to include trafficking done by: threatening to control access to controlled substances, using any scheme/pattern to coerce, threaten or intimidate, use/threat of force or violence, or causing/threatening to cause any person to do any act against their will or without consent. Trafficking now includes knowingly receiving compensation from debt bondage or commercial sex acts. A change that you may have heard of is victims of trafficking can now request a court to vacate a conviction/adjudication or expunge a record for prostitution. This is important for many victims of trafficking, because they may have an arrest record for prostitution that prevents them from moving forward in their life. These changes reflect the reality that these individuals were forced, manipulated, tricked, or coerced into the acts that got them convicted.

Changes to Community Safety

- **Other Acts:** Prosecutors in sexual crime cases are now able to introduce evidence of similar acts (to show that the offender has a history of this type of behavior), even if the other acts do not involve the same victim. This could increase the chance that offenders would be held accountable for their crimes.
- **Lifetime Sex Offender Supervision:** Act 362 added some sex offenses to the list of those eligible for lifetime supervision, which could improve community safety.
- **Sexually Violent Offenders:** Changes were made to the standards for a sexually violent person (an offender who has been civilly committed under statute 980) to obtain a release from their civil commitment; they are now more likely to be required to be supervised by the Department of Corrections after their release from commitment.
- **Sex Offenders and Schools:** Act 88 changed restrictions for sex offenders so that sex offender registrants may not be on school premises unless the school has been notified of the specifics of the visit. Exceptions to this rule include elections, if the offender has a child enrolled at the school, or if the offender is enrolled as a student in the school.
- **Sex Offender Registry:** Act 283 now requires that a sex offender registry includes any sex offense dismissed as a part of a plea agreement.
- **Restraining Orders:** Act 311 allows the court to increase the length of a domestic abuse or harassment restraining order from 4 to 10 years if there is evidence that there is substantial risk that the defendant may commit a serious sexual assault.

Act 243-Addition to Distribution of Sexually Explicit Images

These laws were created to address how many individuals now distribute sexually explicit images without the knowledge or consent of the person in the image. This distribution has been labeled as "revenge porn". The law basically makes it a crime if someone distributes sexually explicit images when they know that the person in the image does not want the image distributed or the person does not gain the consent of

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Rompiendo la Barrera

Breaking the Barrier

By Annabell Bustillos

Fear of reporting Sexual Assault in Latino Communities

As the Bilingual Outreach Advocate, I have the opportunity to work with both the Spanish speaking community and the Hispanic community as a whole. Through working with families I have learned of many fears of reporting sexual assault that Latino families have. I would like to share some of these fears with you.

One big fear that often comes up when speaking with families is the fear of deportation, if they are undocumented. If they are here undocumented and the perpetrator is documented this can be used as a threat or tool to keep the victim from telling anyone. This can make the decision to report very difficult. What is worse? Being sent away from your family, not knowing if you will be able to see them again or keeping this secret? Most of the time the decision that is made is the latter of the two.

There is also the fear of breaking up the family. The bureau of justice reports that 6 in 10 rape or sexual assault victims said that they were assaulted by an intimate partner, relative, friend or acquaintance. This means it could be their father, uncle, brother, cousin or any known member of the community. In many Latino communities, the Latino community is seen as your "familia" or family, regardless of your blood relation. Another fear that comes to mind is the fear of seeking help outside of the "familia" or community. The thought is often, what happens to me stays in the "familia." The "familia" can handle it. There is a big trust issue with anyone that is not part of the "familia." There is a fear that what happened will be known by all. That without that trust there is no stopping them from telling everyone. The thought is, if you tell someone outside of the "familia" they will tell everyone and then you will be singled out.

The last fear that I would like to discuss is the fear of not being understood, if the victim does not speak English. This can make finding help difficult. Imagine getting over all of the previously discussed fears and then going to seek help and not being understood. If there isn't anyone who speaks Spanish available they may be told to come back or, "Sorry I do not speak Spanish." They may be misunderstood, if English is their second language. They may not be able to explain their needs well enough. In this case they may be given the wrong resources or sent somewhere that may not be able to assist them. This is a big reason why it is easier to just keep quiet.

Sexual assault can have devastating effects. It can tear lives apart and can injure people physically, emotionally and spiritually, regardless of the victim's gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, or economic background. Finding the right support and help is essential to moving on, to healing and to empowerment. If you or anyone you know needs information about sexual assault please contact the office at 262-619-1634 or our 24hr crisis line at 262-637-7233.

To find out more about our bilingual services please contact me (Annabell Bustillos) at 262-619-1634 ext. 14 or via email at annabell.bustillos@lsswis.org.

—Annabell



Get a jump start on your holiday shopping and support Sexual Assault Services at the same time!

This year, SAS will be participating in Boston Store Community Days. We will be selling coupon booklets for \$5 each, and 100% of that \$5 goes directly to SAS. The booklets contain a coupon for \$10 off any purchase of \$10 or more, as well as a number of other discounts - over \$500 worth of coupons in all. The booklets can be used in the store on Friday, November 14th and Saturday, November 15th.

To purchase a booklet, contact us or visit <http://www.communitydayevent.com/> and search for our organization. We appreciate your support!



Meet Emily!

Hello, My name is Emily Hidden. I am the newest intern at Sexual Assault Services (SAS) and I am excited to be a member of the team here! I started at SAS the first week of June and I will be here until the end of December. I have really enjoyed my time so far at Sexual Assault Services, getting to know individual clients and their families, as well as all of the counselors and staff at SAS. I am currently pursuing my master's degree in Professional Counseling at Concordia University-Wisconsin. I have a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education and I really enjoy working with children and their families. I am so grateful to have the opportunity to complete my internship hours at Sexual Assault Services and I am looking forward to the rest of my time here!



A Closer Look

By Carla Pratt

I was fortunate to be able to attend a Human Trafficking Workshop put on by the Department of Justice (DOJ) last month. The information that they shared included statistics about the prevalence of human trafficking, the average ages of those being trafficked, the profile of youth likely to be trafficked, and plans and ideas for helping victims transition to a life after being trafficked.

The definition of Human Trafficking is: controlling a person through force, fraud, or coercion to exploit the victim for forced labor, sexual exploitation, or both. According to the DOJ, Human Trafficking is a billion dollar industry and the fastest growing of criminal activities. It happens in all areas and communities, big and small, rural and urban. With the increased use of social media and technology to advertise, order, and deliver “product”, the boundaries to small and/or rural communities have disappeared and anyone, anywhere can connect to those who are selling people for sex or forced labor.

The Department of Justice has found that, while both adults and youth are trafficked, youth are particularly vulnerable to traffickers. They also have found that there is a direct correlation between youth that they term “high risk” and sexually trafficked youth. They determine high risk youth to be those that are repeat runaways, repeat throwaways, or have a history of sexual abuse or violence in the home. “High risk youth may also be those that come from a home with a history of drug or alcohol abuse, youth involved in criminal activity or youth that are being exploited in other areas. According to the National Center for missing and exploited children, one in seven endangered runaways reported that they were likely victims of human trafficking in the sex trade.

While it is true that trafficking victims can be of any age, ethnicity or gender, a report in the New York Times stated that most sex traffickers say that although they prefer adults because they are associated with fewer legal risks, they can get more money from transactions utilizing underage victims and underage victims are in more demand. In addition, underage victims are more vulnerable, and therefore more easily manipulated and controlled by traffickers. Pimps often exploit their vulnerability by offering them shelter, food, safety and love. By the time the victim is aware that their rescuer intends for them to sell sex for money, they are entangled in a complex relationship, controlled by fear of harm to themselves or loved

ones, manipulation and/or drugs. Many coming from homes of abuse and violence are convinced that they are in love with and loved by their trafficker and do not want to leave the relationship.

According to a survivor of trafficking at the workshop I attended, traffickers often have unprotected sex with their victims in hopes of getting them pregnant; giving the trafficker one more tool for manipulation and control. She also stated that the victims sometimes feel as though the trafficker and other victims under his/her control are “family” and they don’t wish to be alone in the world.

In order to help a survivor of trafficking transition to a life after trafficking, we need to make sure that the many needs of that survivor can be addressed. These include shelter (short term and long term), food, medical health needs, mental health needs, educational needs, help in finding employment, and support throughout the transition (which can take a long time). This particular survivor stated that one of the most helpful things for her eventual success in transitioning was the support of a mentor. She also stated that she, like many, returned to “the life” more than once and the fact that her mentor and others helping her did not abandon her upon her return was key. She stated that the average trafficking survivor returns to “the life” seven times before they are successful at the transition to life after trafficking. In order for a transitional program to be successful, the fact that survivors will have a multitude of needs and that those survivors will most likely not be successful upon their first attempt at transition must be addressed.

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During Sexual Assault Awareness Month/Crime Victim’s Rights Week 2014, the inmates and staff at the Racine Correctional Institution, where SAS regularly provides prevention programming, participated in several fundraising activities and donated the proceeds to SAS. We were very grateful to be the beneficiaries of their generosity. Thanks RCI! The photo above shows Vicki and Annabell (who provide the prevention programming) receiving the check from RCI staff.



Family Advocate

By Samantha Sustachek

As the Family Advocate at the Racine County Child Advocacy Center (CAC), I have periodic conversations with parents and caregivers about talking to their children about sex and sexuality. This is often a difficult topic for caregivers to broach with their children – they may feel awkward or uncomfortable bringing it up – but it is so important for their well-being and safety that children be given accurate information on this topic.

The matter becomes even more complicated when I encounter a family with a child with a disability. While policies and attitudes have changed over the years to improve general opportunities for individuals with disabilities, societal attitudes have changed less in regards to their sexuality. As a society, we have a hard time admitting that children in general have sexual feelings and desires, and if the child in question also has a disability, the likelihood that s/he will receive proper sex education decreases. This is dangerous for a number of reasons, including the fact that children are already vulnerable to sexual abuse and living with a disability only adds to that vulnerability. Proper education about boundaries and their own bodies is essential to reducing the risk of sexual abuse among children with disabilities.

Parents can and probably should be their children's first and primary sex educators. Unfortunately, beyond the awkwardness that many parents feel about the subject of sexuality, they may also fear that talking about sex will encourage their children to experiment with it, that they themselves do not have enough information to answer their children's questions accurately, or that their children already know more than they should. While parents feel that talking about sex may lead to these and other problems, in reality, not talking about it may cause their children to make unwise and uninformed decisions, take unknowing risks with their sexual health, or even contribute to sexual abuse going unreported.

Luckily, educating children with disabilities about sexuality is not all that different than educating children without disabilities. Many of the same techniques can be employed, and all children need similar information. Parents of children with developmental disabilities will need to consider their children's developmental age rather than chronological age and adjust the information provided accordingly. Here are some suggestions for talking with children about sex and sexuality:

- Be willing to acknowledge that all humans are sexual beings, including children and people with disabilities.
- Start young! Children need a good foundation for sex education long before they reach puberty.
- Label private body parts accurately. Studies have shown that children are more likely to report abuse if it occurs when they have appropriate language for private parts.
- Identify times and communication strategies that work for the individual child (in the car, after school at snack time, by watching a video, reading a book together, or completing an activity together). Conversely, don't try to force strategies and times that do not work for the parent or child.
- Use "teachable moments" (such as a neighbor's pregnancy) to your advantage. These moments can jump start a meaningful conversation.
- Always be honest (but age appropriate). If a caregiver does not know the answer to a child's question, s/he should say so, but also be sure to find out the answer and get back to the child with it.
- Repeat information over time, adding more as children become developmentally ready. Just as we continually educate children about things like fire safety and how to safely cross the street, sex education is not a one-time shot.
- Acknowledge and affirm children's feelings and experiences. Never minimize their contributions to the conversation.
- Be sure to address boundaries and limits. Children need to know that others should respect their boundaries, but that they also need to respect the boundaries of others. Using role plays can help, as children often respond well to concrete teaching strategies.
- Understand that children with disabilities, especially developmental disabilities, are far more vulnerable to sexual abuse than their peers without disabilities. Sex education needs to include the skills to reduce their risk of sexual abuse and also to report it if it does happen. I will discuss this point further in a future issue of *Branching Out*.

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SAS Program Statistics January - June 2014

Crisis Line Calls.....	120
Racine Hospital Visits.....	47
Burlington Hospital Visits.....	4
Legal Advocacy Sessions.....	6
New Counseling Clients.....	42
Counseling Sessions.....	409
Support Group Sessions.....	20
Community Presentations.....	28
CAC Appointments.....	98

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the person to distribute the image, even if the person consented to the image being photographed or videotaped.

Act 338-Victims gain access to the Pre-Sentence Investigation Report

Act 338 grants victims access to the pre-sentence investigation report (PSI). PSI's are compiled on a convicted person before they are sentenced by the judge. PSI's inform the sentencing judge on many factors before sentencing the defendant. In the past, only the prosecutor and defense counsel were entitled to a copy of the PSI. The victim is now entitled to access the sentencing recommendations and any information in the report that contains information pertaining to the victim. This could help the survivor to feel validated about their experience and informed about the process.

Act 37-Reproductive Health Care Access

Act 37 requires that a woman seeking an abortion to first obtain an ultrasound. There is an exception for sexual assault victims but only for those victims who have reported the sexual assault to law enforcement. As many of us are aware, the majority of sexual assault victims do not report their sexual assault to law enforcement and this requirement may be a traumatizing for the sexual assault victim who is seeking reproductive health care. Act 37 also enacted restrictions on abortion providers. The act required that providers have admitting procedures for physicians who provide abortions which could force the closure of several clinics in Wisconsin. Currently, this part of Act 37 is being reviewed in the courts and is not being enforced.

Lastly, for a more detailed explanation of all the changes to the statutes, please review a WCASA webinar that was originally aired on August 13, 2014. This webinar explains in detail all the changes to the statutes that affect sexual assault survivors. You can access this webinar at <http://www.youtube.com/user/wcasavpcc>.

--Vicki

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I am always happy to provide caregivers with resources for talking to their children about sexuality and sexual abuse. Please feel free to contact me at any time or refer caregivers to me if they are looking for activities or books to help start a conversation with their children about these important subjects. I can be reached at 262-619-1634 x12 or via email at ssustachek@lsswis.org.

--Sam

This column was adapted from an article from Advocates For Youth, entitled "Sex Education for Physically, Emotionally, and Mentally Challenged Youth." See www.advocatesforyouth.org for more information.

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How do we as advocates recognize situations in which the survivors we meet may be victims of sex trafficking? The following are indicators that someone may be a trafficking victim:

- Individuals who have no contact with friends or family and no access to identification documents, bank accounts, or cash;
- People whose communications and movements are always monitored or who have moved or rotated through multiple locations in a short amount of time
- Individuals who have no cash or ID available
- Individuals accompanied by a controlling 3rd party who refuses to leave the victim alone with anyone.
- Individuals who are accompanied by a person they seem to fear
- Individuals with a lot of health issues that have not been treated
- Individuals with tattoos for which they give no explanation
- Individuals with signs of physical abuse

If we suspect that we are working with someone who is a trafficking victim we should not pressure them for information because we could be putting them in danger. Rather, treat them with respect and empower them to make decisions. If you have a chance to talk to them alone, ask them if they are ok and if they need help. If you suspect someone is the victim of Human Trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 1-888-373-7888.

--Carla

SAS Wish List

- Volunteer Advocates!
- Gift cards/certificates from Target, Office Depot, grocery stores or other discount stores
- Courage to Heal book series
- New clothes for victims to wear when they leave the hospital (t-shirts, sweat pants, underwear, etc.)
- Body lotions & shower gels to be given to victims seen at the hospital
- General art and craft supplies for the children in our counseling program
- Bus tokens so that clients can access our services
- Forever stamps (the kind that do not expire as the rates change)
- Monetary donations are always needed and appreciated



Sexual Assault Services
1220 Mound Ave., Suite 304
Racine, WI 53404

Contact Us!

SAS Racine Office
1220 Mound Ave. Suite 304
Racine, WI 53404
262-619-1634

SAS Burlington Office
480 S. Pine St.
Burlington, WI 53105
262-763-6226 Ext. 109

24 Hour Crisis Line: 262-637-SAFE (7233)

Website: <http://www.sasoflss.org>

Stay Connected!



Join our News and Events email update list! Would you like to receive information on upcoming SAS events and volunteer opportunities? Email Samantha Sustachek at ssustachek@lsswis.org with "SAS news and events" in the subject line and she will include you in all SAS news and events related emails.

Sexual Assault Services seeks to create a safe and compassionate environment to help promote the healing of sexual assault survivors and their support people.

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